

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
WESTERN DIVISION**

KENNETH CARDWELL,
Plaintiff,

vs

DR. GILL, et al.,
Defendants.

Case No. 1:14-cv-143

Dlott, J.
Bowman, M.J.

**REPORT AND
RECOMMENDATION**

Plaintiff, a prisoner at the Warren Correctional Institution (WCI), brings this *pro se* civil rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against defendants Dr. Gill and Dr. Washington. (Doc. 1, Complaint). By separate Order issued this date, plaintiff has been granted leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915. This matter is before the Court for a *sua sponte* review of the complaint to determine whether the complaint, or any portion of it, should be dismissed because it is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. See Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1995 § 804, 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B); § 805, 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b).

In enacting the original *in forma pauperis* statute, Congress recognized that a “litigant whose filing fees and court costs are assumed by the public, unlike a paying litigant, lacks an economic incentive to refrain from filing frivolous, malicious, or repetitive lawsuits.” *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 31 (1992) (quoting *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 324 (1989)). To prevent such abusive litigation, Congress has authorized federal courts to dismiss an *in forma pauperis* complaint if they are satisfied that the action is frivolous or malicious. *Id.*; see also 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B)(i). A complaint may be dismissed as frivolous when the plaintiff cannot make any claim with a rational or arguable basis in fact or law. *Neitzke v.*

Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 328-29 (1989); *see also Lawler v. Marshall*, 898 F.2d 1196, 1198 (6th Cir. 1990). An action has no arguable legal basis when the defendant is immune from suit or when plaintiff claims a violation of a legal interest which clearly does not exist. *Neitzke*, 490 U.S. at 327. An action has no arguable factual basis when the allegations are delusional or rise to the level of the irrational or “wholly incredible.” *Denton*, 504 U.S. at 32; *Lawler*, 898 F.2d at 1199. The Court need not accept as true factual allegations that are “fantastic or delusional” in reviewing a complaint for frivolousness. *Hill v. Lappin*, 630 F.3d 468, 471 (6th Cir. 2010) (quoting *Neitzke*, 490 U.S. at 328).

Congress also has authorized the *sua sponte* dismissal of complaints that fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915 (e)(2)(B)(ii). A complaint filed by a *pro se* plaintiff must be “liberally construed” and “held to less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers.” *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007) (per curiam) (quoting *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976)). By the same token, however, the complaint “must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to ‘state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.’” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)); *see also Hill*, 630 F.3d at 470-71 (“dismissal standard articulated in *Iqbal* and *Twombly* governs dismissals for failure to state a claim” under §§ 1915A(b)(1) and 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii)).

“A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678 (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 556). The Court must accept all well-pleaded factual allegations as true, but need not “accept as true a legal conclusion couched as a factual allegation.” *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555 (quoting *Papasan v. Allain*, 478 U.S. 265, 286

(1986)). Although a complaint need not contain “detailed factual allegations,” it must provide “more than an unadorned, the-defendant-unlawfully-harmed-me accusation.” *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678 (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555). A pleading that offers “labels and conclusions” or “a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do.” *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555. Nor does a complaint suffice if it tenders “naked assertion[s]” devoid of “further factual enhancement.” *Id.* at 557. The complaint must “give the defendant fair notice of what the . . . claim is and the grounds upon which it rests.” *Erickson*, 551 U.S. at 93 (citations omitted).

In the complaint, plaintiff alleges that defendants have been deliberately indifferent to his medical needs in violation of the Eighth Amendment. Plaintiff states that he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia for which he received antipsychotic medication prior to his imprisonment. Plaintiff alleges that he received the medication at the Franklin County Jail in Columbus, Ohio, however once he was transferred to the Ohio Department of Corrections he has been unable to obtain the medication. Plaintiff’s complaint reveals that plaintiff has attempted suicide on two occasions and that the defendant Doctors have diagnosed him with Major Depressive Disorder, for which he has been prescribed medication.

Plaintiff’s complaint must be dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. In order to state a claim for relief under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 concerning a denial of medical care, plaintiff “must allege acts or omissions sufficiently harmful to evidence deliberate indifference to serious medical needs.” *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976). A prisoner who is allowed to suffer needlessly through a denial of medical care when relief is available has a cause of action under the Eighth Amendment against an individual whose deliberate indifference caused the suffering. Plaintiff must allege that prison officials have denied his reasonable requests for medical care when such need is obvious, and when he is

susceptible to undue suffering or threat of tangible residual injury. *Byrd v. Wilson*, 701 F.2d 592, 594 (6th Cir. 1983); *Westlake v. Lucas*, 537 F.2d 857, 860 (6th Cir. 1976); *see also Estelle*, 429 U.S. at 106. Where medical assistance has been administered, such treatment must be so “woefully inadequate as to amount to no treatment at all” in order to give rise to a cause of action under § 1983. *Westlake*, 537 F.2d at 860-61 n.5. Not every claim of inadequate medical treatment states an Eighth Amendment violation. *Estelle*, 429 U.S. at 105. Allegations of negligence in diagnosing or treating medical conditions are not actionable under § 1983. *Estelle*, 429 U.S. at 106; *Byrd*, 701 F.2d at 595 n.2; *Westlake*, 537 F.2d at 860-61 n.5. A prison official may be held liable under the Eighth Amendment for denying humane conditions of confinement, including proper medical care, only if “he knows that inmates face a substantial risk of serious harm and disregards that risk by failing to take reasonable measures to abate it.” *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 847 (1994).

Plaintiff’s complaint fails to allege facts showing the defendants were deliberately indifferent to his medical needs. Although plaintiff contests his diagnosis, the complaint reveals that plaintiff has been evaluated by doctors while in the Ohio Department of Corrections, that he has been diagnosed and that he receives medication based upon the diagnosis.¹ (*See* Doc. 1, CM/ECF p. 21). “Where a prisoner has received some medical attention and the dispute is over the adequacy of the treatment, federal courts are generally reluctant to second guess medical judgments and to constitutionalize claims that sound in state tort law.” *Westlake*, 537 F.2d at 860 n. 5. It is well-settled that “a complaint that a physician has been negligent in diagnosing or

¹ As an attachment to the complaint, plaintiff has included a Disposition of Grievance form concerning his claim that he has been denied medical treatment. The disposition states as follows: “You are being treated for your current diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder with Effexor and Remeron. DRC Policy 67-MNH-07 indicates that the psychiatrist/APN-MH will be permitted to prescribe medication based on his/her medical judgment. Therefore, if the prescriber at WCI does not feel your diagnosis calls for a prescription medication, it is within his/her right according to DRC policy. The prescriber does not have to prescribe medication based on your request.” (Doc. 1, CM/ECF p. 21).

treating a medical condition does not state a valid claim of medical mistreatment under the Eighth Amendment. Medical malpractice does not become a constitutional violation merely because the victim is a prisoner.” *Estelle*, 429 U.S. at 106. “[A]n inadvertent failure to provide adequate medical care cannot be said to constitute ‘an unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain’ or to be ‘repugnant to the conscience of mankind.’” *Estelle*, 429 U.S. at 105-106. Plaintiff’s allegations may amount to negligent treatment, but without more the Court is unable to conclude that plaintiff’s complaint states a claim for relief under the Eighth Amendment for deliberate indifference to serious medical needs. Therefore, the complaint against Dr. Gill and Dr. Washington should be dismissed.

IT IS THEREFORE RECOMMENDED THAT:

1. Plaintiff’s complaint be **DISMISSED** with prejudice pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A(b).
2. The Court certify pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3) that for the foregoing reasons an appeal of any Order adopting this Report and Recommendation would not be taken in good faith and therefore deny plaintiff leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*. See *McGore v. Wigglesworth*, 114 F.3d 601 (6th Cir. 1997).

s/ Stephanie K. Bowman
Stephanie K. Bowman
United States Magistrate Judge

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NOTICE

Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b), any party may serve and file specific, written objections to this Report & Recommendation (“R&R”) within **FOURTEEN (14) DAYS** after being served with a copy thereof. That period may be extended further by the Court on timely motion by either side for an extension of time. All objections shall specify the portion(s) of the R&R objected to, and shall be accompanied by a memorandum of law in support of the objections. A party shall respond to an opponent’s objections within **FOURTEEN DAYS** after being served with a copy of those objections. Failure to make objections in accordance with this procedure may forfeit rights on appeal. *See Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *United States v. Walters*, 638 F.2d 947 (6th Cir. 1981).